

## Prelim Bits 07-10-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

### Ethylene Glycol and Diethylene Glycol

*After the death of 66 children in Gambia, the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged the people to not use four India-manufactured fever, cough and cold syrups.*

- Diethylene glycol (DEG) and Ethylene glycol both are sweet-tasting, colourless, odourless liquid commonly used in the commercial preparation of antifreeze,
- Ethylene glycol is used in the production of polyester fibres, paints and polyethene terephthalate (PET)
- DEG because of its hygroscopic property, is used in brake fluid, cigarettes, treatment of paper and some dyes.
- It is an excellent solvent for many relatively insoluble substances.
- **Current Issue** - These four products contain unacceptable amounts of *diethylene glycol* and *ethylene glycol* as contaminants in them.
- These chemicals can cause toxic effects, including abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, inability to pass urine, headache, altered mental state, and acute kidney injury that may lead to death.
- Currently, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) is investigating this case.
- **Legal Action** - If contaminants are found in the imported drugs, proportionate action will be taken against the company, which may include suspension of the licence to export the drug.
- The current Drugs and Cosmetics Act has provisions for up to three-year imprisonment, while the [proposed Bill](#) has increased this to a minimum of 10 years.

### Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council of India

- Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) is a promotion body set up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- It was set up to promote the Indian pharmaceutical industry.
- The roles of the council are
  1. To advise the government,
  2. To organize seminars and meetings on export-related issues,
  3. To organize business meetings in India and abroad
  4. To organize trade delegations.

### Central Drugs Standard Control Organization

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) is the national regulatory body for pharmaceuticals and medical devices in India.
- It is divided into zonal offices which do pre-licensing and post-licensing inspections, post-market surveillance, and recalls when needed.
- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), which is an organ of the CDSCO, is responsible for approving and licensing of drugs and medical devices.

## References

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## Sri Lanka and U.N. Human Rights Council

*India abstained from voting on a resolution against Sri Lanka at the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC).*

- The resolution was titled '[Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka](#)'.
- The resolution was adopted with 20 nations voting in favour in the 47-member UNHRC, seven against, including China and Pakistan, and 20 abstentions, including by India, Japan, Nepal and Qatar.
- India abstained from voting while observing that Sri Lanka's progress in implementing commitments on the 13th Constitutional Amendment, meaningful devolution and the early conduct of provincial elections.

*The 13<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment passed in 1987 mandates a measure of power devolution to the provincial councils, which were established to govern the island's nine provinces.*

*The 13th Amendment is the only constitutional provision on the settlement of the long-pending Tamil question.*

## UN Human Rights Council

- The Human Rights Council (HRC) was established in 2006 as part of the UN's reform process.
- It replaced the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The UNHRC is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system, made up of 47 States.
- Members are elected by the UNGA with 3-year terms, with a maximum of 2 consecutive terms.
- They are responsible for promotion and protection of human rights.
- It meets 3 times a year to examine human rights violations worldwide.
- Its resolutions are not legally binding but carry moral authority.

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2. <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/sri-lanka-human-rights-record-unhrc-india-voting-8194460/>
3. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/the-hindu-explains-what-is-the-13th-amendment->

## Vyommitra

*'Vyommitra' humanoid is undergoing pre-flight ground tests, in order to fly aboard the first unmanned test flight ahead of the crewed Gaganyaan flight.*

*A humanoid is a robot with the appearance of a human being.*

- **Vyommitra** (vyoma means space, mitra means friend) is a female-looking spacefaring humanoid robot.
- It was designed and developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) **to fly aboard unmanned test missions** like the Gaganyaan.
- Vyommitra is also being called a half-humanoid since she will only have a head, two hands and a torso, and will not have lower limbs.
- The AI-enabled robot, has been designed to resemble a human with facial expressions and speech and sight capabilities.
- ISRO has successfully integrated it with a computer 'brain' which enables it to 'read' control panels aboard the unmanned test flights and communicate with the ISRO ground stations.
- Vyommitra can withstand vibrations and shock during the flight.
- **Digital twin** of Vyommitra will be developed to undergo computer simulations where the control systems are tested for microgravity conditions.

## Gaganyaan

- ISRO's Gaganyaan is India's first manned space mission.
- The Gaganyaan programme would demonstrate human spaceflight by sending a crew of three astronauts to the 400-km Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and bringing them back safely.
- As per the mandate of Gaganyaan, two unmanned missions will be undertaken prior to the manned mission.
- To know more about the Gaganyaan Mission, [click here](#).

## References

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## Paris Club on Sri Lanka Debt Restructuring

*Creditors of the Paris Club have reached out to China and India to coordinate talks on a Sri Lanka debt restructuring.*

*India and China are non-Paris Club official bilateral creditors to Sri Lanka.*

- Sri Lanka is nearly bankrupt and has suspended repaying its \$51 billion foreign debt, of which it must repay \$28 billion by 2027.
- The Paris Club's willingness to coordinate with the non-Paris Club creditors has led to the

formation of an official creditors' committee.

- This official creditors' committee, where China and India agreed to work with the Paris Club, would help Sri Lanka to bailout a \$2.9-billion rescue package from the International Monetary Fund.

## The Paris Club

- The Paris club is an informal group of mostly wealthy, bilateral Western creditors.
- The club is headquartered in Paris, France.
- The Paris Club has 22 permanent members, including most of the western European and Scandinavian nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan.
- Its role is to find coordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by borrower countries.



## Common Framework

- G20's Common Framework plan is a programme set up at the height of COVID-19 for debt-crippled poor countries.
- This framework is to help these countries restructure their debt and deal with insolvency and protracted liquidity problems.

*Sri Lanka is not part of this framework as it was classified as middle income country at*

that time.

## References

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2. <https://canadatoday.news/ca/paris-club-seeks-cooperation-with-china-in-sri-lanka-debt-talks-98167/>
3. <https://www.ft.lk/top-story/Paris-Club-says-ready-to-start-SL-debt-relief-work/26-739474>
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## Padmanabhapuram Palace

*Recently, the Kerala government has conducted a preliminary study for conservation of the Padmanabhapuram Palace.*

*Padmanabhapuram or Kalkulam was the capital of erstwhile princely state of Travancore (Venad).*

- Padmanabhapuram Palace, an exemplar of Kerala architecture, is listed in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- The 400-year-old palace was built between the 1590s and the early 1800s.
- The palace is in Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.
- It continues to be under the control of the Kerala government even after Kanniyakumari was annexed to Tamil Nadu.
- The Palace is a Protected Monument of the Department of Archaeology, State Govt. of Kerala.
- **Architecture** - Padmanabhapuram Palace is the oldest, largest and well-preserved surviving example of the traditional wooden architecture in India.
- Timber is used for constructing the walls, the roof frame, and also the structural elements such as pillars and beams.

*Taccusastra is the prescription for the function and placement, direction, size and design of a structure and specifications for designated spaces within individual structures.*

- The palace was built in adherence to the traditional building code, the Taccusastra.
- The palace also showcased the influence of the Portuguese and the Dutch in the details of decorative motifs.



## References

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